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BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE REV. THOMAS SPENCER  
OF LIVERPOOL.

[The life of this remarkable man was written by his successor in the ministry, and has recently been published in this country. The following brief account was extracted from the work for the Christian Disciple.]

THE REV. THOMAS SPENCER was born at Hertford, January 21, 1791. His parents, placed in the middle sphere of human life, were respectable for their piety, and highly esteemed in the circle in which a wise Providence had allotted them to move. The years of his infancy and childhood were not undistinguished by some intimations of a superior mind. He himself observes, in a hasty sketch of his life, "As far back as I can recollect, my memory was complimented by many as being very retentive, and my progress in knowledge was more considerable than that of my school-fellows; a natural curiosity and desire of knowledge, I think I may say, without vanity, distinguished even the period of my infancy. I now remember questions that I asked when about four years old, which were rather singular, and which

were confined chiefly to biblical subjects. No child could be more attached to places of worship, or could be more inquisitive about their concerns than myself; and I may add, more given to imitate the actions of the minister and clerk."

When he had completed his fifth year, he suffered the severest earthly privation a child can know, in the loss of an affectionate mother. Whilst a school boy, he became passionately fond of novels, histories, adventures, &c. He delighted much in solitude; nor did he know a happiness superior to that of being alone, with one of his favorite books. His natural levity was excessive. Yet he was not without his moments of serious reflection, and that of a very deep and dreadful kind.

The bias and inclination of his mind began at this early period to be disclosed; preachers and preaching seemed to exercise all his thoughts, and often he would exercise himself in addressing such domestic congregations as may be supposed to constitute the usual auditor

ries of an infant. But his *preaching exhibitions* could not long be confined to the narrow circle and scanty congregation his father's house supplied; tidings of his early *pulpit talents* soon circulated through the neighbourhood; many were anxious to listen to the instructions of this extraordinary child; and regarded him, as "*a parson in embryo.*"

At about the age of twelve years, Mr. Spenceer considered himself to have become the subject of serious impressions of a deep and permanent kind, and to have felt something experimentally of the power of religion. The effect he distinctly records to have been that of heightening his desire of the christian ministry, for which, it was strongly impressed upon his mind, God had destined him; whilst it reconciled him to his present situation, which was most unfriendly to the accomplishment of his ardent wishes; for the circumstances of his father's family were at that time of such a nature as to render his assistance necessary between the hours of school, and at length compelled his parent, however reluctantly, entirely to remove him. He bowed at first with reluctance to the yoke of manual labor, when but partially imposed—he rapidly performed the appointed task, and leaped with joy from toils so repugnant to the elevated and ardent desires of his soul, to solitude and to books; and when compelled entirely to leave his school, and pursue from day to day the *twisting of worsted*, which he

calls *the worst part of his father's business*, his grief was poignant and his regret severe. But religion in early life assumed in him her mildest and most amiable forms. Its characters were those of uncomplaining acquiescence in the will of God, and cheerful resignation to his earthly lot. He continued working at his father's business and in his father's house, for about a year and a half.

Mr. Spencer was recommended by a friend to place his son with Messrs. Winwood and Thodey, respectable glovers in the Poultry, who also introduced him to Mr. Thodey's notice. The first interview between the parties was satisfactory; every arrangement was made preparatory to his being bound apprentice, and Thomas soon after entered this worthy gentleman's house. Here, as formerly at school, his amiable manners, his modest behaviour, and engaging appearance, soon won the affection of the family, whilst his fervent piety and superior talents excited emotions of a higher order.

After a residence of about four months with his employers in the Poultry, circumstances occurred of such a nature as to render his services no longer necessary, on which account he left London and returned for a while to his parents at Hertford; but some time previous to this event, he had been introduced to the notice of Thomas Wilson, Esq. Treasurer of the Academy for educating young men for the ministry, at Hoxton. Mr. Wilson perceived in him piety and



talents far above his years; and gave it as his decided opinion, that his views should in some way or other be directed towards the ministry.

Mr. Wilson introduced him to the Rev. William Hordle, of Harwich, a gentleman to whose care some of the young men were committed, whose youth or other circumstances did not allow of their immediate entrance into the Academy, though they were considered as proper objects of its patronage. The time fixed for his entrance into Mr. Hordle's family was January, 1806.

At Harwich Mr. Spencer was completely in his element. He commenced the year 1806 in Mr. Hordle's family, and was then about completing the fifteenth of his life. Whilst at Harwich he regularly shared with Mr. Hordle the pleasing duty of conducting the devotions of the family.

In November he drew up a statement of his religious experience, his views of theological truth, and his reasons for desiring the christian ministry. These papers, written in a style of dignified simplicity, and disclosing a knowledge and experience of divine things, which in a youth, scarcely sixteen years of age, must have excited the admiration of all to whom they were submitted. The fifth of the January following was appointed for his personal appearance before the constituents of that institution.

On the 7th day of January 1807, he appeared at Hoxton, before the committee, and underwent the examination, with success and honor; was admitted

a student, and became immediately an inmate of the house. At the vacation in June he returned to his father's house at Hertford. During his stay there he preached his first sermon in public. His auditory consisted of about thirty plain country people—and his text was 1 John i. 5. Simple and unlettered, however, as his audience might be, they had sufficient penetration to discover the uncommon talents of their youthful preacher. During the vacation he preached in various places. His fame so widely circulated, that numbers flocked from all parts to hear him, and so numerous were the invitations that crowded upon him, that he might have preached every day in the week, had he been so inclined.

One Sabbath afternoon, in January 1808, the Rev. Mr. Leifchild, who was supplying the pulpit at Hoxton chapel, expressed a wish that Mr. Spencer would assist him in the public service, by reading the scriptures and engaging in prayer. The request was granted. The following extract of a letter from Mr. Leifchild will convey a lively picture of the deep impression which his appearance and manner produced upon the large congregation before whom he stood.

"When he appeared in the pulpit, after the first emotions of surprise were over, so sweetly did he read the chapter, so earnestly, so scripturally, so experimentally, did he engage in prayer, that for the whole six Sabbaths afterwards he became

the chief magnet of attraction to the place. The people now insisted upon it he should preach."

The entreaties of the people having prevailed, Mr. Spencer, though contrary to the standing order of the institution, was allowed to preach. When he appeared in the pulpit at Hoxton, a youth just seventeen years of age, he betrayed none of that distressing anxiety which marks the candidate for public approbation; but stood with all the dignified composure, and spoke with all the unembarrassed energy of an ambassador for Christ.

Mr. Spencer's second sermon at Hoxton chapel was delivered September 8th. The general sentiment of approbation and delight at first excited by his youthful appearance and his extraordinary pulpit talents, was now deepened and established, and he began to preach pretty extensively in the pulpits of the metropolis and its neighbourhood.

His letters during his popularity in London breathe a spirit of humility; and a piety seldom surpassed in fervor and sincerity tended to preserve him steady in the midst of that tempestuous sea, upon whose billows, though young and inexperienced, it was his lot to ride.

From January 1809, to the following midsummer, his labors appear to have been, in point both of number and success, truly astonishing. By much preaching and fatigue, his strength became exhausted and his health impaired.

During the midsummer vacation of the year 1810, Mr. Spencer preached at Newington

chapel, Liverpool. The chapel soon became crowded to excess. There seemed to be indeed a *shaking amongst the dry bones*. A divine unction evidently attended his ministry, and such were the effects produced, that every beholder with astonishment and admiration, cried "what hath God wrought!"

Very soon after his return to Hoxton, Mr. Spencer received from the church and congregation at Newington chapel, a unanimous and pressing invitation to accept the pastoral office over them. The call was dated on the 8th of August 1810. After near seven weeks deliberation, Mr. Spencer returned an answer in the affirmative.

On Sunday, third of February 1811, he commenced his stated pastoral labors at Newington chapel, Liverpool. He was then just twenty years of age.

The uncommon attention excited in Liverpool by Mr. Spencer's ministry soon suggested the necessity of providing more accommodation than Newington chapel could afford. A most judicious plan for erecting a new chapel was proposed and adopted, the dimensions of which were thirty two yards long outside, and twenty one yards and a half broad. A liberal subscription was soon obtained, and on the 15th of April Mr. Spencer laid the first stone of the chapel, in the presence of an immense assembly, computed to consist of about six thousand persons. On that truly interesting occasion, he delivered an appropriate address and solemnly dedicated the house to God by prayer.

The church and congregation



at Liverpool, became anxious for the ordination of Mr. Spencer, and Thursday the 27th of June was appointed for that solemn service. Mr. Spencer was now fully invested with that sacred office, which from his infancy he had desired; and he set himself diligently to the discharge of its momentous duties.

The scene closes rapidly upon us. On the last Sabbath of his life, August 4th, he rose with unusual health and spirits. The family with whom he resided always beheld him with peculiar interest on the morning of the Sabbath, such an air of angelic mildness and composure sat upon his countenance, and so deeply did he seem absorbed in the contemplation of the sacred duties of the day. That morning he preached from Jer. xxxi. 3. *"I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."* In the evening, in the midst of a throng, such as is rarely witnessed, and from which hundreds departed unable to gain access, he preached from Luke x. 42. *"One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."*

After the labors of the day he went to the house of a friend to supper. With great fervor he led the devotions of the family. At supper the conversation was pure and spiritual. The subject was sudden death. The countenance of Spencer, always animated, was lighted up with holy joy as he discoursed upon the glory of departed saints. He spoke much upon the bles-

sedness of putting off the garments of mortality in a moment, and being caught unexpectedly and instantaneously to heaven.

On Monday morning, August 5th, the last day that dawned for him, he rose rather later than usual; his mind was too active for his body; the exhausted frame required rest.

He frequently bathed; he purposed doing so that day. He had just repeated the first verse of Cowper's admirable hymn,

"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm,"

when one of the family came into the room, and said, that if he intended bathing, it was time that he should go, as it would soon be high water. He assented; but whilst a towel was being procured for him, he said to a friend, "I can't tell how it is, but I don't feel so much inclined to go to-day, as usual." He was asked if it was thought good for his health—he answered "yes, it will brace my nerves after the exertion of yesterday."

Arrived at the spot which he had selected, he asked a gentleman, who had been bathing, "if that was a good place to bathe at?" He answered that it was, but that it was rather stony near the side, but better when further in. Mr. Spencer replied, "I rather think it is a good place for myself, and I don't like to bathe near the pottery there are so many people." Mr. Spencer then asked again "is the tide nigh up?" to which he was answered, "about half past eleven."

"Oh! dear," said Mr. Spencer, "it is near twelve."

Soon after he went into the water, the man who was on the shore having lost sight of him, was alarmed. He plunged into the water to render him assistance, but found it impossible. He communicated the intelligence, boats were directly manned and brought to the spot, but the body was not found until it had been under the water fifty minutes. Every expedient was, in the course of the afternoon, resorted to, but alas, in vain! and at five o'clock, in the opinion of all present, there remained not the faintest hope of restoring animation; the spark of life was totally extinguished.

The tidings spread through the populous town of Liverpool, with a rapidity, such as, in cases of public calamity, is usually inspired. Such a day has seldom been seen in Liverpool; a day of such dreadful gloom, such universal grief. From the countenance of every one, to whom the tidings came, one might have imagined he had lost a friend.

As a man, he was generous, frank, independent, unaffected, unsuspecting, and sincere. As a friend, he was warm, disinterested, and affectionate. As a student, he was diligent, consci-

entious, and successful. As a christian, he was fervent, holy, and humble. As a minister, his discourses were evangelical and judicious; he was remarkable for animation, and was solemn. Although as a preacher he obtained almost unexampled popularity, yet, he was remarkably modest and unassuming. In his visits to the sick he was constant and tender. His intercourse with his people was cheerful, spiritual, and instructive. In all the duties of the pastoral office, he was well informed, affectionate, and constant.

The foregoing particulars of Mr. Spencer have been given in the language of his biographer. Affection and admiration may unquestionably have influence on the most upright biographer, and occasion some things to be expressed in language too strong and unqualified. It is however believed that all who shall read the life of Spencer with a spirit of candor, and free from envy, will be convinced that he was indeed a young man of an extraordinary character. That he was perfect we are not to suppose. As we should be careful not to overrate, so we should be disposed not to undervalue what is truly estimable.

#### MUTATIONS OF ORTHODOXY AND HERESY. No. I.

WE have repeatedly avowed that a particular object of this work is, to abate prepossessions and cultivate the spirit of candor and charity. We are fully

convinced that a great portion of the animosity which has existed among christians has been occasioned by the use that has been made of the terms *ortho-*



*doxy* and *heresy*. In the various conflicts of parties, one of these words has been used as a *shield*, and the other as a *sword*. We wish to take these equipments from the hands of partizans and lay them by, until they can be used for better purposes, than that of destroying the peace of the church. We shall therefore attempt to show our readers how the public have been imposed upon by the ungodly use which has been made of the terms in question. For this purpose we shall show, that what has been termed *orthodoxy*, is not an invariable system of correct doctrines; that reputed orthodox men in different ages have entertained very opposite opinions; that what has been called orthodoxy in one age, is treated as heresy in another; that what has been called heresy in one age, is orthodoxy in another; and that the same opinions are both orthodox and heretical in the same age, according to the humor of different partizans.

We shall not however take so extensive a range as might be expected on the plan proposed. It is not our intention here to go back to the ancient history of the church, nor to dwell on the well known facts, that papists and protestants equally claimed to be considered orthodox, and mutually reproached each other as heretics. Facts of more recent date will be brought to view, and things which relate to protestants of our own country. As it is our wish to produce an effect favorable to the cause of candor and charity, we

shall simply state things as we find them, forbearing all censure of persons or opinions.

No system of doctrines is more generally known in our land, than the shorter catechism of the Westminster Assembly; and no one has more generally been reputed orthodox. This was considered as the standard of orthodoxy in New England, at the commencement of the last century, and by many it is so regarded at the present time. It is however a fact, that the orthodox of the present day deny several doctrines of the catechism, which were formerly esteemed *as essential* as any in the system. Not only so, these very orthodox divines have adopted several opinions which were formerly considered as heretical, and which are as repugnant to the catechism as truth is to error, or light to darkness.

In the catechism we have these two propositions:—

“The covenant being made with Adam not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.”—“The sinfulness of that estate into which man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.”

We may here appeal to the aged, and ask:—When you were young, was any doctrine more warmly advocated as *essential*,

than the one now quoted from the catechism? Was it not introduced into almost every prayer you heard made by orthodox ministers and christians? Was it not by many thought to be impossible, that a minister should be a good man, who denied the doctrine?

Let us then listen to the orthodoxy of the present day, relating to the same questions. We shall introduce a passage from Dr. Emmons. In his sermon on Matt. xii. 35. For a second inference he has the following:—

“This subject teaches us that neither a good nor evil heart can be transmitted or derived from one person to another. Adam could no more convey his good or evil heart to his posterity, than he could convey his good or evil actions to them. Nothing can be more repugnant to scripture, reason, and experience, than the notion of our deriving a corrupt heart from our first parents. If we have a corrupt heart, as undoubtedly we have, it is altogether our own, and consists in evil affections and other evil exercises, and not in any moral stain, pollution, or depravity, derived from Adam. This clearly appears from the very essence of an evil heart, which consists in evil exercises, and not in any thing prior to, distinct from, or productive of evil emotions or affections. The absurd idea of *imputed* and *derived depravity*, originated from the absurd idea of the human heart, as being a principle, propensity, or taste distinct from all moral exercises. But since ev-

ery man's corrupt heart is his own, and consists in his own free and voluntary exercises, he ought to repent, and look to God for pardoning mercy. And unless he does this, he must perish; for God hath said, *‘The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, but the soul that sinneth, it shall die.’*”

Our discerning readers will readily perceive, that in this passage we have a *positive* and *designed denial* of the doctrine quoted from the catechism. The old orthodox doctrine of *imputed* and *derived depravity* is censured as “absurd”—as “repugnant to scripture, reason, and experience;” and what would, at the commencement of the last century, have been censured as abominable heresy, is now boldly advanced as the orthodox faith. Since it is so evident that good people may differ in opinion, what better use can be made of the facts before us, than for all to learn their own liability to err, and for each to exercise that candor towards others, which he wishes others to exercise towards himself. The contradiction we have exhibited is indeed direct and glaring. If Dr. Emmons had not previously established a reputation for orthodoxy, it would perhaps have been difficult to distinguish between the opinion we have quoted from him, and that of a man whose very name has been converted into a term of reproach, and been used by many as such for several centuries. We have however the pleasure of believing, that many pious men have been of the opinion of the West-



minster Assembly, and that many equally pious have been of the opinion of Dr. Emmons; but we do not believe that the *opinions* adopted, respecting the question before us, has been any evidence of piety on the one side, or the other. It is also our belief that the uncharitable spir-

it, which has often appeared in managing the controversy, is far greater evidence of a want of christian humility, than either of the contradictory opinions. A man may innocently err in *opinion*, but error in *temper* is always criminal.

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NECESSITY OF DENYING OUR CONSTITUTIONAL PROPENSITIES.

It has been observed with justice, that every man possesses what may be called his constitutional temperament, which distinguishes him more than any thing else, from those around him; which constitutes his peculiar cast of mind; which now aids his virtue, and now lays him open to temptation; and which must be guarded and restrained with care, or he can make no progress in the christian life. In this number I shall urge as an argument for the government of our constitutional propensities, that this is necessary not only to virtue, but to the happiness of life, and that the want of this is the principal source of that discord which embitters the social state.

No man can have mixed much with society, without discovering the necessity of mutual concession and self-denial. The happiest disposition in the world will find some one with which it cannot unite. How then can those, who have never attempted to suppress an inclination, or counteract a propensity which interferes with another, hope to preserve any peace or unanimity within the circles in which they move? Do you not

see that if you would not continually revolt others, you must often contradict yourself. Do you not see that in a world so full of contrary humors, conflicting interests, and innumerable perversities of temper, you must often yield, and sacrifice, and forget, and pardon? Do you not find by every day's mortifications, the necessity of unwearyed self-denial? The world would be a scene of unmitigated depression, if every man obstinately pursued the suggestions of humor, and were never to curb the licentiousness of his caprices?

One man's disposition is sober and retired. He loves to shrink into himself, to employ himself in solitary reveries, to wrap himself up in the tranquil and selfish pleasures of private meditation. He lives in the world, it is true, but sees, and hears, and mixes with little that passes around him. He acquires an unattractive indifference of character, with which no one is pleased, and which most are disposed to meet with an indifference equally repulsive. Nay, there are men who indulge this humor, till it degenerates into absolute rudeness and misanthropy; till

civility offends them, and every attempt to conciliate their affections drives them to a remote retreat, or dyes deeper the hue of their sullenness; till happiness chagrins them; till the only pleasure they seem to enjoy is in obstructing or at least in avoiding to encourage the satisfaction of others.

This man has a native fire and impetuosity of temper which now bursts out into storms of passion, and now rushes upon you with a tempest of tenderness and fondness equally disgusting.—That man is difficult and disposed to find fault. He takes an absurd pride in loving, and esteeming, and commending nothing; he is jealous, and looks askance upon the merit of another; he is suspicious, and looks doubtfully upon every thing which promises well. You cannot persuade him to inquire, for he is afraid he shall find things better than he feared; or if he is induced to examine, it is that he may detect something to condemn. He has confidence in no one, and feels sure of nothing. He says in his cool moments, what David said in his haste, "all men are liars." The appearance of sincerity alarms him; openness of character he construes into a more refined hypocrisy; and no one can cherish an intimacy with such a man, because he has never yet put confidence in any.

Another man's temper is reserved and mysterious. He has no simplicity and unaffectedness of character, no overflowings of soul. He never discloses the whole of his feelings; he never tells more than half his se-

cret; that he may the more effectually conceal the remainder.—Others, on the contrary, are excessively indiscreet and inquisitive. They learn every thing, that they may have the pleasure of retailing their information, and can neither be persuaded to remain ignorant of what they ought not to know, or to conceal what they ought not to betray. I need not stop to show you what you see at a glance, how unfriendly are all these peculiarities of temper to the harmony and happiness of social life. I will rather extend the survey of these contrarieties of temper which cannot coincide, cannot cooperate.

We have suggested in a former number, that the love of singularity is one of our most dangerous temptations; it is no less one of our most discordant humors. There are some odd and contradictory spirits, who are continually hunting for paths which no one ever trod, full of paradoxical notions and capricious tastes, which have nothing to recommend them but this, that no one has ever turned to them before. These men, rather than agree with you, will contradict their own sentiments as soon as they become yours.—And what think you of that native haughtiness and imperiousness of disposition which is so oppressive to the humble, so intolerable even to the self-complacent; which is not contented with respect, but demands homage and adulation; which requires your reason to submit to all its fancies, and your temper to yield to all its caprices?

There is also, as we have inti-



mated, an excessive sensibility of temper, a morbid delicacy of feeling, which some people indulge, utterly incompatible with the peace and happiness of society. An inattention, a mistake, an unguarded word, a trifle, will inflict a wound on persons of this temper, which no future care and attentions can restore. Tremblingly alive to every thing which wounds themselves, and insensible to any thing which may hurt others, you find that you must pardon every thing in them, while they will pardon nothing in return.

Then too, how many are there of the fickle, and flying, and inconstant, who seem to indulge you for a little while with their friendship, that they may make you feel the pain of their indifference and forgetfulness; full of caprice, they love and hate by turns; what won their affections to-day, excites their resentment to-morrow; now they avoid, and now they court you, and thus vacillate between reconciliations and affronts.

In fine, there are some dispositions which are to be nourished by perpetual chagrin, which are never happy except when you are vexed, and to whom it would be a misfortune to have nothing to complain of.

What a multitude of contradictory tempers are here! And is this the world in which we are to live? What sources of antipathies, animosities, contests, litigations, and discordancies without number! In such a world, how can you escape perpetual opposition! You are full of life, and you meet with noth-

ing but indolence and ease; you are moderate and prudent, and you meet with nothing but fire and impetuosity. You are frank and sincere, and you meet with dissimulation and artifice. You are affectionate, and obliging, and you find cold and hardened hearts. You are delicate and full of sensibilities, and you encounter malignant raillery, or insulting disdain. You are gentle and still, and you find nothing but wild transport and mad vivacity. You are polite, and you meet with nothing but rudeness or clownish demeanor. You are serious, and are compelled to join in foolish sports. You are gay, and encounter a most freezing solemnity. You are discreet, and are continually suffering from the restless curiosity and unfortunate imprudence of others.—Nay more—the contrariety of our tempers is not the only source of our discord; the very resemblance of our dispositions separates perhaps more people than it unites. We cannot bear in others, the humor we indulge in ourselves. The delicate, the sensible, the passionate, the imperious, the odd, and the extravagant, are not a little disturbed when they encounter others who are as delicate, sensible, passionate, imperious, odd, and extravagant as themselves.

Now, in such a world as this, how are peace and charity to be preserved? Not by bending the dispositions of others to our own, but by accommodating ours to others. How indispensable then is self-denial, a self-denial which, by becoming habitual

shall be easy, and by being conscientious shall be permanent. How much ought we to curb our desires, I had almost said, to eradicate our propensities, and wash away every color of humor from our souls that we may be able to endure the passions of others.

It is by the gracious influence of the gospel alone, that this self-renunciation can be effected. Policy may make us sometimes

yield; politeness may make us uniformly civil; fear may occasionally prevent our offending; but it is only in the celestial spirit of evangelical morality, in the sweet influence of that grace, meekness, and poverty of spirit, which Jesus commended, that we shall find an unfailing, and unmingled stream of social virtue, of social harmony, which shall make glad the intercourse of life.

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HAPPY EFFECTS OF GROWTH IN GRACE, EXEMPLIFIED IN  
MR. BAXTER.

MR. RICHARD BAXTER has been generally esteemed as a man of eminent piety and benevolence. In writing his own life, he gave an account of some important changes in his views and feelings after he supposed himself to be truly converted. The following particulars may be worthy of the attention of ministers and private christians. In some future numbers of this work, a more full account of Mr. Baxter may be expected.

At first I was greatly inclined to go with the highest in controversies, on one side or other. But now I can so easily see what to say against both extremes, that I am much more inclined to reconciling principles. And whereas I then thought, that conciliators were but ignorant men, that were willing to please all, and would pretend to reconcile the world by principles, that they did not understand themselves; I have since perceived, that even if the amiableness of peace and concord had no hand in the business, yet greater light and stronger judgment are usually to be

found with the reconcilers, than with either of the contending parties.

I less admire gifts of utterance and bare professions of religion, than I once did; and have much more charity for many, who by the want of gifts do make an obscurer profession than they. And I have met with some humble christians, not noted for any extraordinary profession or forwardness in religion, but only to live a quiet, blameless life, whom I have after found to have passed, as far as I could discern, a truly godly and sanctified life; only their prayers and their duties were by accident kept from human observation.

I am not so narrow in my special love as heretofore; being less censorious. I am not therefore so narrow in my principles of church communion, as once I was.—I am not for narrowing the church any more than Christ himself alloweth us, nor for robbing him of any of his flock; though I am more apprehensive



than ever of the great use of ecclesiastical discipline.

I am much more sensible of the evil of schism, and of the separating humor; and of making several sects in the church, than I was heretofore. For the effects have showed us more of the mischiefs.

I am much more sensible, how prone many young professors are to spiritual pride and self-conceitedness, to unruliness and division. Yet in restraining this, I am much more sensible of the sin and mischief of using men cruelly in matters of religion, and of pretending men's good, and the order of the church, for acts of inhumanity and uncharitableness. Such know not their own infirmity, nor yet the nature of pastoral government, which ought to be by love; nor do they know the way to win a soul, or to maintain the churches' peace. And I am more deeply afflicted for the disagreements of christians, than when I was younger. Except the case of the infidel world, nothing is so grievous to my thoughts as that of the divided churches.

I do not lay so great stress as many young professors do, upon the external modes and forms of worship. I have suspected, myself, as perhaps the reader may do, that this is from an abatement of my former zeal; but I find that *judgment* and *charity* are the causes of it, so far as I am able to discover. I cannot be so narrow in my principles of church communion as many are. If I were among the Greeks, the Lutherans, the Independents, yea, the Anabaptists, (that own

no heresy, nor set themselves against charity and peace,) I would hold occasional communion with them as christians, provided they would give me leave, though my most usual communion should be with that society, which I thought most agreeable to the word of God.

I am much less regardful of the approbation of men, and set much lighter by contempt or applause, than I did long ago. And as far as I can perceive, the knowledge of man's nothingness, and of God's transcendent goodness, the sense of the brevity of human things, and the nearness of eternity, are the principal causes of this effect, which some have imputed to self-conceit and moroseness.

I am much more sensible than before of the breadth, and length, and depth of that odious sin of selfishness; and of the excellency and necessity of self-denial, and of loving our neighbour as ourselves.

I am more and more sensible, that most controversies have more need of *right stating* than of debating; and if my skill be increased in any thing, it is *that*, in narrowing controversies by explication, separating the *real* from the *verbal*, and proving to many contenders, that they differ less than they think they do.

I am more solicitous about my duty to God, and less solicitous about his dealings with me; being assured, that he will do all things well; acknowledging his mercy, even in the punishment of men, and knowing there is no rest but in the will and goodness of God.

Thus much of the alterations of my soul, I thought best to give the reader, instead of all those experiences, and actual motions, and affections, which I suppose him rather to have expected an account of. And having transcribed thus much of a life, which God hath read, and conscience

hath read and must further read, I humbly lament it as too unequal and unprofitable. And I mention these errors of my earlier years, that they may serve as a warning to others, as they call on myself for repentance and watchfulness.

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SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT. SECT. 4.

HAVING finished the business relating to the scriptures and traditions, the subject of original sin was brought forward for examination. From the writings of the protestants the council made out the following articles.

1. That Adam, by transgressing the precept, hath lost justice, and incurred the wrath of God and mortality; and though he be impaired both in soul and body, yet no sin is transferred from him to posterity, but only corporal punishments.

2. That Adam's sin is called *original*, because it is derived from him to posterity, not by *transmission*, but by *imitation*.

3. That original sin is ignorance, or contempt of God, or want of fear, without confidence in his Majesty, without divine love, and with concupiscence and bad desires, and generally a corruption of the whole man in his will, soul, and body.

4. That in children there is an inclination to evil proceeding from the corrupted nature, so that after the use of reason, it bringeth forth a loathing of divine things, and an immersion in matters of the world, and that this is original sin.

5. That children, at the least, born of faithful parents, though they are baptized into the remission of sins, yet they have no sin by descending from Adam.

6. That original sin is not cancelled in baptism, but not imputed or so razed that it beginneth to diminish in this life, and is wholly rooted out in that to come.

7. That the sin remaining in the baptized hindereth his entrance into heaven.

8. That concupiscence which cherisheth sin and remaineth after baptism, is truly sin.

9. That the principal punishment due to original sin, is hell-fire, besides corporal death and other imperfections unto which man is subject in this life.

These articles are exactly copied from the translation, excepting the words are here spelt according to modern use; but the sixth article in particular is so unintelligible that it is difficult to ascertain what was really intended.

Some of the articles were supposed to express the opinions of Zuinglius, and others the opinions of Luther. The members of the council were not agreed



among themselves, but there seems to have been a general disposition among them, to censure the opinions of the protestants as heretical. The historian informs us that they were the most troubled to tell "how the sin of Adam was transmitted to his posterity." Some said one thing and some another. Andreas Vega, a Franciscan divine, thought it very improper for the council to censure an opinion as *heretical*, without declaring first what ought to be believed as the orthodox faith. He conceived that the council were assembled not merely to condemn heresies, but principally to tell the catholic truth; that every one would expect from the council a perspicuous doctrine, cleared from all difficulties. But his opinion was disregarded; the "prelates had no hope of being able by study to be well informed in the crabbed school points; nor durst they," says the historian, "go about to make trial of it." They were afraid that if they attempted to state what should be received as orthodoxy, a schism among themselves would be the consequence. Besides, it was much easier to unite in censuring others, than in stating their own opinions. The bishops were much perplexed with the contradictory opinions and reasonings on the subject. That they might be united among themselves in passing their censures, they took this ground—"that this only is clear, that every one hath original sin before baptism, and is perfectly purged of it by baptism. They therefore concluded that this should be established for *faith*, and the

contrary condemned for *heresy*, together with all those opinions which deny original sin, in what sort soever. But what that sin is, there being so many differences among the divines, they said it was not possible to set down so circumspectly that it might satisfy all, and not condemn some opinion which might cause a schism."

Still another difficulty arose in respect to the virgin Mary, whom they styled "the Mother of God." In opposition to the opinion of Zuinglius, they were disposed to say, "*that the sin of Adam passed into all mankind,*" but they perceived that this declaration would comprehend the blessed Virgin. The Franciscan bishops and friars started an objection on this ground, and urged that she should be mentioned as an exception. But the Dominicans objected to making any exception in her favor. The Pope being informed of the debate on this point, directed them not to meddle with a matter which might cause division among themselves. Having received this order, the leading characters urged that all contention should be laid aside, and that both parties should unite against the protestants. To settle the difficulty it was agreed, that a declaration should be made, "that they did not mean either to comprehend or except" the blessed Virgin. After this compromise, on the 17th of June, 1546, they published the *decree of faith*, with five *Anathemas*.

1. Against him that confesseth not that Adam, by transgressing, hath lost sanctity and

justice, incurred the wrath of God, death and thralldom to the devil, and is infected in soul and body.

2. Against him that averreth that Adam by sinning hath hurt himself only, or hath derived into his posterity the death only of the body, and not sin, the death of the soul.

3. Against him that affirmeth that sin, which is one in the beginning and proper to every one transmitted by generation, not imitation, can be abolished by any other remedy than the death of Christ; or denieth that the merit of Christ is applied as well to children as to those that be of ripe years, by the sacrament of baptism ministered in the form and rite of the church.

4. Against him that denieth that children which are newly born ought to be baptized, though the sons of christians; or saith they are baptized for remission of sins, but not because they have contracted any original sin from Adam.

5. Against him that denieth that by the grace of baptism the guilt of original sin is remitted; or saith that all is not removed which hath the true and proper nature of sin, but that it is razed and not imputed, concupiscence still remaining in the baptized, for an exercise which cannot hurt but him that consenteth to it; the which being called sin by the apostle, the synod declareth that it is no true and proper sin, but is so termed because it ariseth from sin and inclineth to it. That the synod meaneth not to comprehend in the decree the blessed Virgin, but that the constitutions of Sixtus 4th ought to

be observed, which it doth not renew.

Here we behold a council of professed ministers of the gospel, pronouncing anathemas against their protestant brethren, for dissenting from them on points respecting which the anathematizers could not agree among themselves. They were agreed in scarcely any thing relating to original sin, except in condemning the reformers.

Among the numerous evidences of human depravity and blindness, we may perhaps place in the front rank the bitter contentions which formerly existed respecting the doctrine of original sin. From the manner in which the controversy was often conducted, one would be ready to suspect that some of the partizans were determined to *prove* the doctrine of total depravity by their own examples.

How much more commendable it would be in christians, for each one to humble himself for his *own sins*, and to cultivate the spirit of the gospel, than to spend his time in violent debates about the effects of Adam's sin! Let the evil effects of his sin be what they may to his posterity, it is very certain that uncharitable contention, vain jangling, and censorious judging, are not the remedies prescribed by the gospel. It is infinitely more important to every man, that he should repent of his own offences, and embrace the salvation offered in the gospel, than that he should be able to explain in *what manner*, or to *what extent*, our situation has been affected by the transgression of Adam.



REVIEW OF MR. PASCHAL'S SEVENTH LETTER RELATING TO THE  
JESUITS.

THE letters of Mr. Paschal unfold in a striking manner the irreligious and immoral principles of the Jesuits and the tendency of their doctrines to undermine the christian religion, and to authorize the most atrocious crimes. The letter now under review was dated at Paris, April 25, 1656. It was addressed to a friend in the country, and reports an astonishing conversation which had just before taken place between Mr. Paschal and one of the Jesuitical Fathers, on the subject of *duelling, assassination, &c.* In the preceding conversations the Father had very frankly disclosed several of the principles of his sect, and shown how their writers had contrived to authorize many things which had been generally considered as immoral and criminal. He now proceeds to show Mr. Paschal how gentlemen might fight duels, and even assassinate one another, without being guilty of any sin.

Thus the Jesuit addresses Mr. Paschal:—"You know, sir, that the ruling passion of this rank of men, is a certain point of HONOR, which hurries them every moment to commit such violences as appear directly opposite to christian piety; inso-much that we should banish by much the greater part of them from our confessionals, if our fathers had not softened a little the severity of religion, and suited themselves to human weakness. But as they were desirous to adhere to the gospel by

their duty towards God, and to the world, by their charity to their neighbour; they were obliged to make use of their utmost penetration, to find out expedients adapted to adjust matters in so nice a manner, that a man may defend or retrieve his honor by the common methods of the world, with a safe conscience; and preserve at the same time his religion and his honor."

Mr. Paschal replied with "seeming indifference"—"I wonder how it can be done!"

"You wonder!" said he; "so I believe.—Do you consider that on the one hand the gospel commands, not to render evil for evil, but to leave vengeance to God; and on the other, that the laws of the world forbid you to put up with affronts without doing yourself justice, very often by the death of your enemy? Did you ever see any thing in your life, that appeared more irreconcilable? And yet when I tell you that our Fathers have reconciled these things, you only tell me you wonder at it."

"Father," said Mr. Paschal, "I must own I did not sufficiently explain myself. I solemnly declare, I should hold it to be impossible, if I did not know from what I have seen of your Fathers, that they can make possible, what to the whole universe besides is utterly impossible."

"You must know," replied the Jesuit, "that this wonderful principle is our excellent method of DIRECTING THE INTENTION.

You have seen some faint strokes of it in some of the maxims I discussed before; for, when I told you in what manner servants might carry certain *slippery messages* with a safe conscience, did you not take notice that it was to be done by *taking their intention off* from the *sin itself*, and placing it to the *profit* arising from thence? That is what we call DIRECTING THE INTENTION. But that you may know the extensive power of this grand expedient, I shall now display its principal lustre in cases of *murder*, which it justifies in a thousand instances."

"I see already," said Mr. Paschal, "that by this method one may do *any thing* without one single exception to be made."

"Not so fast," replied the Jesuit, "you are always upon the extremes, which is a great fault, let me tell you, and you ought to correct it. To show you that we do not permit *every thing*, you must know, for example, that we never suffer any man to entertain a formal intention to sin, for *sinning's sake*. And whoever is so obstinate as to have no other view in his wickedness, but wickedness itself, we break with him immediately.—No, that would be a rule without exception to any age, sex, or quality whatever. But when a sinner is not in this unhappy abandoned disposition, then we try to put in practice our method of *dereciting the intention*; which consists in proposing to a man's self some lawful object to steer his actions. Not but that we endeavour, as much as we can, to dissuade him from what

is forbidden, but when we cannot *prevent the action*, we *rectify the intention* at least, and so correct the *viciousness of the means* by the *purity of the end*.

"This is the way by which our Fathers permit all the outrages our gentlemen commit in defence of their honor. For there is nothing else to do, but to take off their *intention to revenge*, which is criminal, and to place it on the *desire of defending their honor*, which is lawful in the opinion of our Fathers. And in this way they fulfil their duty towards God and towards man. For they satisfy the *world* by permitting their *actions*, and satisfy the *gospel* by purifying their *intentions*."

Upon Mr. Paschal's expressing some doubt whether the Jesuitical authors had gone to such a length in their publications, the Father produced authorities in abundance. One author says, "*Private persons are forbid to revenge themselves*." Thus at one stroke all the prohibitions of the gospel respecting revenge are set aside, as having no relation to *gentlemen*, who are disposed to defend their *honor* by duelling. Another says, "A man that has received a blow must not have the intention to *revenge himself*, but he may have the intention to *avoid infamy*; and for that reason may return the affront on the spot, and that too by the *sword*;" After quoting authors to prove that a gentleman may not only accept but give a challenge, the Jesuit produced authority for *assassination*, or "*slily*" taking life. "A man may likewise stab



and kill his enemy *slily*; and when he can do so, and get quit of him, it is better than to fight a duel, for then he neither exposes his own life to danger, nor partakes of his enemy's crime, which he must do in a duel."—Still however care must be taken to "DIRECT THE INTENTION."

The Jesuit having attempted to show that a *gentleman* might kill his antagonist, for "a box on the ear or the stroke of a stick," or for "*only the intention* to give a blow," Mr. Paschal asks, "Cannot you tell me how to *direct my intention* so as to kill a man for giving me the lie?" Immediately the Jesuit quotes authority:—"It is lawful to kill the man who says to you, *you lie*; if there is no other way to correct his insolence." Then he adds, "And our Fathers will give you leave to kill a man for *slander*." This he also proved sufficiently.

Mr. Paschal observed, "I see, Father, that you have taken abundant care to defend men's honor, but you have left their *lives* very much exposed, if I can lawfully and with good conscience kill a man for bare slander, or a disobliging motion of the lips."

"That is very true," said the Father, "but our casuists have had circumspection enough, not to put this doctrine entirely into practice upon such frivolous occasions. For they own at least, *we must not always put this in practice*;"—"because if we were to kill all the backbiters and slanderers, we should dispeople a whole state in the twinkling of an eye."

Mr. Paschal suggested in the course of the conversation, that on the principles of the Jesuits, "except the clergy, nobody will scruple to kill a man that injures him in his honor or his goods." This at once led the Jesuit to a vow, and to prove, that the clergy were on a level with other *gentlemen*, as to the right of killing. "Nay," said he, "according to our celebrated Father L'Amy, it is lawful for priests or monks to kill by way of *prevention* such as have a mind to blacken them by backbitings and calumnies. But you must always take along with you a *well directed intention*." When they drew near to the close of the conversation, Mr. Paschal remarked with pertinency and force—"How lucky it is for such as cannot bear injuries, to learn this doctrine! But ah! how unhappy for those who give the offence! Sincerely and truly, Father, it is better to have to do with people that never learned any religion at all, than with those who have learned it as far as *this direction*. For in short, the *intention* of the assassin is but poor comfort to him who is wounded. He does not perceive this secret intention, but only feels the too well directed thrust. And I do not know whether a man would not be less vexed to be brutally killed by a set of madmen, than to feel himself conscientiously stabbed by pretenders to piety."

This abstract and review of Mr. Paschal's letter opens the way for some reflections and remarks on the enormity of the *principle*

adopted by the Jesuits, and on these must be reserved for a future number.  
the practice of duelling; but

### THE DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION.

No man can have lived much in the world without observing how much the multitude are governed by words. A popular name, whether in politics or religion, has an immense influence on public sentiment. Hence every sect is desirous to appropriate to itself and to its opinions, some title which is in general reputed, and to fasten some odious epithet on the sentiments of its opponents. It is wonderful that so common an expedient should continue to be successful. But the present age with all its improvements is in no small degree enslaved by sounds; and not a few receive or reject opinions, chiefly on the ground of the popular or unpopular names, which are commonly attached to them.

Among these watch-words of party, the phrase prefixed to this essay is not the least effectual. It is not uncommon to hear certain christians claiming for their opinions the honorable name of "the doctrines of the reformation," and this magic phrase undoubtedly operates on numbers with a power which no weight of argument could exert. On this account I have thought it useful to inquire what is the fair import of this phrase, and what christians may most lawfully avail themselves of its influence.

It seems a very obvious remark, that "the doctrines of the reformation" must mean those

doctrines which distinguished the reformers, which formed the separating line between them and their opposers; and not those, which they continued to hold in common with the church from which they separated. It is well known that the reformers on leaving the Catholic church, did not renounce all its views and opinions, but on many points continued to think as they did before. Now those opinions, in which both parties agreed, can with no more propriety be called the doctrines of the reformation than the doctrines of popery. These opinions suffered no change; they were not introduced, restored, or in any way influenced by the reformation. Why then is this term employed to designate them? For instance, the reformers and catholics agreed in affirming with equal zeal the existence of God, and the divine mission of Jesus Christ. Would it not be absurd to call these the doctrines of the reformation, merely because the reformers adhered to them? Are they not on the same ground the doctrines of popery?

These remarks, if just, may be applied to other doctrines. Take for example, that of the Trinity, or of three persons in one God, or the doctrine that atonement has been made for sinful man to the first of these persons by the vicarious or substituted sufferings of the second.



With what propriety is the popular name of "reformation" applied to these sentiments. It was not the object of the reformation to restore or establish these doctrines, for they were established before. It is not pretended that the corruption of the Romish church on these points, rendered secession from her necessary. On the Trinity especially her orthodoxy had been immaculate and unsuspected. Papists may well complain when this is called a doctrine of the reformation, for long before Luther's time they had contended for it even unto blood, and since that period they can boast of having uniformly asserted it, with few or none of those restless attempts to soften and qualify it, which have thrown a shade over the orthodoxy of many reformed churches.

Is it now asked, what were the great points on which the reformation turned, and by which the reformers were distinguished? I answer, they relate chiefly to the powers of the clergy, the rights of christians, and the rule or standard of christian faith. The great errors against which the reformers directed their attacks, were the supremacy of the pope, the derivation of his dignity from St. Peter, his power of forgiving sins, the infallibility of the church, the authority of traditions and of decrees of councils, the efficacy of indulgences, the miracles and merits of saints, the veneration due to the fathers, the propriety and obligation of monastic vows, the necessity of confession to the priest,

and of receiving from him absolution, the power of prayer and alms over the souls in purgatory, the number and efficacy of the sacraments which it was the province of the clergy to administer, and above all the propriety of withholding the scriptures from the common people. The great essential corruption of the catholic church was, that it substituted popes, councils, fathers, saints, and traditions for the holy scriptures, and ascribed to the clergy a power in this world and in the world to come, which reduced the minds of christians to a most abject slavery. It is true, that the reformers differed from the Romish church on some other points, on free will, on the nature of that sin which is derived from Adam, and on the influence of faith and works on justification. But these differences derived much of their importance from their connexion with the subjects stated above, and would not of themselves have produced a separation from the Romish church. It is well known that on these points, orthodox protestants have continually disputed with one another, and very many have seceded from the views adopted by the first reformers. Let it then be remembered, and it cannot be too often repeated, that the reformation consisted, not in establishing a new system of theology on the ruins of the old, for it left untouched in a great degree what may be called the speculative points of popery; but it consisted in emancipating the christian world from the tyrann-

ny of popes, fathers, bishops, priests, monks, councils, and traditions, and in directing all christians to the sacred scriptures as the only pure fountain of christian faith, open alike to all, to the layman as well as to the prelate, to the poor and ignorant, as well as to the learned and opulent.

From these remarks we learn to what christians the honor chiefly belongs of adhering to the distinguishing sentiments and spirit of the reformers. They are those christians who renounce the authority of all *popes*, no matter where they are found, and who acknowledge in no man a successor of the apostles, or a leader authorized to impose on them his interpretations of scripture. The true followers of the reformers, disclaim the authority of *councils*, whether held at Trent or Westminster, and suffer no assembly, synod, or convocation of fallible men, to prepare for them standards of faith or practice. The followers of the reformers disclaim the authority of *traditions*, and receive no doctrines because embraced by fathers and saints, however venerable their memories, or however wonderful the accounts which have been transmitted of their communications with heaven. The true followers of the reformers do not believe that their salvation depends on the favor, intercession, or control of priests, monks, or ministers; but whilst they esteem very highly in love the pious and humble teachers of the gospel, they feel themselves bound to repair to the

word of God, and to exercise their own understandings on what God has spoken. To conclude, the true followers of the reformers are not to be intimidated by anathemas, cries of heresy, charges of forsaking the good old paths, &c. &c. for Luther was almost stunned by these very clamors; but taking Jesus Christ for their only Master, they pass unmoved through good report and evil report, whilst conscious that it is their first care to imbibe and express his truth and spirit.

These remarks will teach us the nature of our obligation to the reformers. We are to honor them not so much for shedding new light on the scriptures, as for opening the scriptures to every eye, and for securing to future ages by their holy intrepidity, the privilege of searching without fear, the records of God. This is their glory, and for this they deserve immortal honors. They hold the next place to the apostles in the rank of benefactors of mankind. The reformation gave liberty to the human mind, broke the chains from our noblest faculties, and opened the prison door to thought and reason. Blessed be God for this most auspicious event.

After these remarks it will not be thought that I can find pleasure in speaking of the errors and defects of the reformers. I revere their names, and recollect with gratitude the services they rendered to religion and mankind. But living as we do, in an age when their judgments seem to be regarded by some as infallible, it is a duty



to observe, that though great and excellent, they were still men, and partakers of human frailty. Luther's strange doctrine of consubstantiation, for which he contended with so much violence, shows that with all the vigor and independence which marked his character, his mind was yet fettered by many prejudices of education. As to Calvin, it is well known that some of his doctrines have been rejected with a degree of horror, by a majority of protestants. Many of the reformers held a sentiment which almost every christian of the present age disclaims with sudden indignation, namely, that force and persecution should be employed against heretics. An error more gross, injurious, and opposed to the spirit of christianity cannot be conceived; yet it found a place in the breast of many a reformer.

I repeat it, I have no desire to injure the well earned reputation of the reformers. These remarks are only designed to prevent an injudicious and implicit adherence to them. I do not cease to respect them on account of their errors, for unless they had been more than men, these errors could not have been

avoided. If we consider the darkness of their age on religious subjects, and the corruption of the church in which they received their first lessons, we shall admire the extent, instead of censuring the imperfection and narrowness of their views. We must remember that all human improvements and reformations are gradual. The world is not to be rescued from ignorance and superstition in a day, or even in an age. The reformers did much, but they left much to be done by their successors. Their light was that of the morning star or the dawning day, full of hope and cheering promise. The splendor of the meridian sun was reserved to happier times, perhaps to far distant ages. Let us then be grateful to the venerable leaders of the reformation; but let not our gratitude degenerate into a blind and servile admiration. Let us express it not only by commending, but by imitating them, by bearing our part, as we shall have ability, in the promotion of the cause which they loved, the good old cause of christian liberty and christian truth.\*

\* The celebrated Zollikoffer of Switzerland, in his anniversary sermons, states the following as the "doctrines" or "principles of the reformation." In the second sermon he states three:—

1. "Truth and error in religious matters should by no means be indifferent to man, whose greatest prerogative is reason."

2. "Every man is authorized, and, if he have capacity for it, is bound, to examine the doctrines of religion himself, and to judge concerning whatever in them is true or false."

3. "Sound reason and Holy Writ are the only rules for distinguishing truth from error in religion; they are the sole means of becoming persuaded of our faith."

In the third sermon he states five:—

1. "No man, and even no society of men, is competent to impose dog-

"WE CAN DO NOTHING OF OURSELVES."

THERE is a sense in which every pious heart feels this maxim to be perfectly true, and of the highest importance. When we mean by it that all our powers of body and mind are the gift of God, that it is his ever present energy that continues and supports them; that if his influence were withdrawn, our strength would instantly be dissolved in more than infant weakness, and the loftiest human faculties would be unequal to the smallest exertion, we say no more than all reason and all scripture justifies and confirms. But the fullest belief of the truth, that we can do nothing originally of ourselves is consistent with the belief that *we can do all that God has given us ability to do*. This is a distinction, which, however plain, it is to be feared is not enough attended to. Under the appearance of a humble sense of our entire dependence, on God there are those who seek an apology for not doing what he has given us the power, and made it our duty to perform. Instead of

using this maxim as a sentiment of piety, it is frequently applied as an excuse for disobedience. It is supposed that though God has commanded us to obey his will, has given us the moral faculties, and will punish severely our disobedience, that it is yet impious to imagine that these moral faculties can be exerted by us to do what he requires, without a new, distinct, irresistible, and altogether miraculous impulse, received immediately from himself. This opinion, coinciding in its results with the Mahometan doctrine of absolute predestination, is of the most dangerous practical tendency. There is reason to think that it is a cause of more sin, and is therefore more hostile to salvation than all the other speculative errors in theology taken together, which have found currency in the world.

That we can do nothing of ourselves is true of *all* our powers, physical, intellectual, and moral; and it is not more true of one class of these powers than of the others. It is true that of

mas on the consciences of other men, the truth of which they do not perceive."

2. "It is not enough that we know the truth, but we should likewise confess it by our words and actions."

3. "All persecution on account of religion and faith, is irrational and unchristian. All compulsory methods in religious matters, and all punishments inflicted on the erroneous are nothing else than utterly unjust attacks on that liberty of conscience, which every man, and every society of men, of right possesses."

4. "The christian religion consists not so much in outward rites and ceremonies, as in christian dispositions of heart, and in such a conduct as is consistent with those dispositions."

5. "The diversity of opinions and usages in matters that do not compose the essence of religion, is no sufficient cause for separating from one another, and for relinquishing church fellowship."



myself, i. e. independently of the power and agency of God, I should be unable to raise my arm, and could not move a muscle of my body. This dependence on God for all the strength of our animal frames, however, does not lessen my obligation to exert that strength for the purposes for which it is given. Every one would think it madness, not humility, for me to refuse to use it in gaining the common comforts and conveniences of life, on the ground, that if it is the will of God that I should have them, he will give me them without my exertions; if it be not his will, all my exertions will be of no avail.

The same thing is true of our intellectual powers. We depend on God for them all. But for a man to refuse to exert his faculties of reason, memory, and judgment, on the ground that all we could effect by them will take place, if God please, without our exertion, and if God does not please, our exertions will be vain, every one sees would be utter folly or impious presumption.

Just so it is with the moral powers of choosing between good and evil, right and wrong, which we are all as much conscious of possessing, as of possessing any other faculties of body or mind. We owe these powers entirely to God. We depend entirely on him for their existence and continuance. But for us to neglect or refuse to exert them in doing our duty, on the ground that if it is God's will that we should be saved we shall be saved without our efforts, and that if such

be not his will our efforts will be vain, is exactly the same extravagance as to refuse to exert our bodily or mental powers on the same plea. But it is said, is it not establishing our own righteousness, is it not making ourselves our own Saviours, to suppose we have any powers to do good of ourselves? We answer by repeating what we have already said: *There is no want of humility in thinking we can do all that God has given us ability to do.* We acknowledge our dependence on him for the power of choosing between right and wrong to be absolute. We claim no sufficiency as of ourselves. But we are *conscious* that he has actually given us this power. In every part of his word he addresses us as possessing this power. Responsibility, here or hereafter, would be an empty sound, if we did not possess it. We must deny that God possesses the attributes either of justice or benevolence, if we could think that he commands us to do what he has given us no ability to perform. And therefore we feel bound to strive to exert our ability according to the commands of God, and the precepts and examples of our Saviour; trusting without presumption in the promises of the gospel, that if we do faithfully use the powers with which we are entrusted, God will concur with our virtuous efforts, and supply us with all the strength that we need.

But those who maintain that we can do nothing of ourselves in the sense which we are endeavouring to oppose, are not

true to their own principles. Notwithstanding they so uncharitably charge a proud, self-righteous spirit on their opposers, they are themselves the men, who most eminently deny it. It is clear that if in the most absolute sense we can do nothing of ourselves, then we are as much unable to sin, as unable to do good. They must therefore either maintain that there is one power we possess of ourselves, namely, the power of sinning; or else, as some of them with dreadful consistency do maintain, that as without God we can do nothing, it is his will that we should do nothing but sin. How does every feeling of our souls revolt from such a representation of that infinitely just and good Being, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and who cannot look upon sin!

If the doctrine founded on the maxim we are considering were always distinctly stated, it would with all well constituted minds be disarmed of its evil. If we were plainly told what is meant by saying we can do nothing of ourselves, is that "we are made by God morally capable of nothing but sin," or what is equivalent to this, that "God is the direct author of all our sinful volitions and desires, for all which he will nevertheless punish us as if they were our own, the question might safely be left to the consciences of all, especially to those who attentively and seriously read the *whole* of the Bible. It is certainly no slight presumption against the truth of the doctrine we oppose, that it

is impossible to state it distinctly and fairly to any good man's understanding, not sophisticated by metaphysical subtleties, without seeing him start away from you with surprize and horror. It is thus that God provides against the perversions of our intellectual faculties by that moral monitor, which he has planted as his vicegerent within the human breast.

But though the evil produced by the desolating doctrine, that man is utterly incapable of doing what God requires of him, is less than we might suppose, it is yet alarmingly great and extensive. As far as it is practically believed, it cuts up by the roots every motive to virtue, which is not drawn from the gross motives of worldly self interest. Religion, in this view of it, becomes the corrupter and deadly foe, instead of the guardian and support of morality.

I am led to this strength of expression by thinking of several instances, which have lately fallen under my own observation, where the most dreadful sins have been defended on the very plea that "we can do nothing of ourselves;" but that "some are born to virtue and others fated to sin." Ought not then every minister of the gospel, who habitually uses language which must tend, however unintentionally on his part, to lead men to such views of their inability to do their duty, consider whether they are not making themselves partakers of the sins, which their doctrines occasion? I would to God I could carry them with me to the death beds



of two abandoned females, whom not long since I was called to attend, that they might see and shudder at the consequences which their bewildering theories produce.

To those who justify themselves in sin on this plea, I would say one word. Do you not *feel* at the moment you are tempted to offend, that God has given you power to resist if you will use it? Are you not *conscious* that if you yield, you alone are guilty, you *deserve* all the consequences of your crime? You cannot but confess the fal-

sity of the excuse at the very moment you make it. Miserable man! while it is on your lips you are self condemned at the bar of conscience, and do you think it will avail hereafter at the bar of God? Hear the solemn denunciation of the gospel, and tremble at the guilt of perverting or eluding it. To them that oppose and disobey the truth, and devote themselves to unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that continueth to do evil.

#### MISTAKES CONCERNING RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

In attempting to correct some mistakes concerning religious experience, I hope at the same time, still more than I have yet done, to convey clear and just conceptions of it. I consider the subject as very important; and in mistaken views of it, I am persuaded, originates not only great unhappiness, but much moral evil.

1. It is thought by some, that religious experience consists essentially, in a sudden and resistless influence, exerted upon the heart at a particular time, in which a great and important change was wrought; and the work of grace at least so far effected, that there is no more danger of falling, so as finally to be lost from the favor of God. This influence is indeed so extraordinary, as to make it properly miraculous. For a moment let us attend to this opinion.

The influence, you say, is sudden, is irresistible, is felt at a particular time. This is the same in substance with the definition, which is sometimes given of conversion. True, you say; for how can any one have religious experience, till he is converted? and what better evidence than his conversion can any one have, that he has actually experienced the power of re-

ligion? But even admitting your definition of conversion, the question, my friend, is not whether or not a man feels the power of religion, when he becomes converted; but whether the feelings of that time should be *all* which we include in a definition of religious experience? I know that some will reply, "the work of grace actually commenced in the heart by the spirit of God, will be progressive; and consequently religious experience will advance with it." But the number, I have reason to fear, is not small, of those who, through a long life, recur to the feelings of a particular time, as unquestionable evidence of their conversion; and although they have since lived in the open and gross violation of some of the plainest duties of the gospel, are satisfied, because, as they believe, they have *once* felt the power of religion. And it is worthy of the attention of those who teach others, that *no one can be a christian, till he has received a direct, supernatural illumination, and is renewed by miraculous agency*, how far they are guilty of leading men into the very dangerous error, that the feelings which they once had, and which they call

conversion, are sufficient evidences that they have experienced religion, and are therefore safe?

If the views which we have given of religious experience are correct, it may, like other experience, be small in its beginning, and gradually advancing to perfection. But whether it be sudden or gradual in its commencement, it cannot essentially advance our preparation for the kingdom and favor of God, unless it be *progressive*. But confound religious experience with conversion, in the sense which has been given of it, and which is certainly adopted by many; make conversion, in this sense of it, to stand for experience; and even if it be acknowledged that there is room for progress, it will be *felt* that there is no absolute necessity for it. You will not say indeed, that this conversion secures you from sin; for every day you must, and perhaps *do* confess, that you transgress the commands of God. But whether you mean it or not, do you not say, that sin in you is quite another thing from sin in others? for others, you believe, may be condemned for offences, of the pardon of which you are now secure. Do you not? for I think that you must to be consistent with yourself, believe that religion produced and perfected in the heart, may be the work of an hour or of a day; for the experience in which you repose your confidence of future happiness, in a day or an hour, or even in a shorter time might have been completed. Are you prepared to admit these consequences? I cannot reconcile them with the commands, "WORK OUT *your own salvation, WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.*"\* "Give all DILIGENCE to make your CALLING and ELECTION SURE."† "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."‡ Nor with the language of Paul concerning himself, "I so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I MYSELF SHOULD BE A

CASTAWAY."§ Either then you are mistaken, or Paul's was not at this time a truly religious experience.

I have a neighbour who believes that, at a particular time he had this experience of religion. Perhaps not less than twenty years have passed, since this great and important influence was exerted upon his heart; and he has ever since been exemplary in his attention to the forms of religion. But he goes from his prayers to mingle with the lowest of men; and though he is not called a drunkard, because he does not stagger as he walks, all who know any thing of him, know his intemperance. His veracity is at least very questionable; and though I know not that he ever swears, he every day becomes voluntarily the companion of the profane, and even seeks his pleasures in their society. Reprove him for his vices, and he will tell you that he knows, for he has *felt* the power of religion. He knows that he has been converted; and this, if not the whole of his religious experience, is that in which he peculiarly trusts, as the evidence of his acceptance. Now I do not say that some may not at first have felt the power of religion suddenly, and with peculiar energy, as he believes that he felt it. But that the feelings of that hour, however peculiar they were, should be all which is properly comprised in religious experience; or even that these feelings should of necessity be in every real christian, the beginning of his experience of religion, seems to me to be a very dangerous mistake; and very liable in other instances to produce the same effects, which it has produced upon him. By the sense of security which it occasions, the mind and heart are left, like a city without walls, exposed to the ravages of every enemy; and even should no triumphant evil passion enter, and spread around a moral desolation, the necessity being unfelt of exertion for *personal holiness*, no efforts will be made, and consequently no progress. These are some of the consequences of this mistake up-

\* Phil. ii. 12. † 2 Peter i. 10

1 Cor. x. 12. § 1 Cor. ix. 26.



on him, who thinks that he has this experience, and who builds upon it his hopes in the eternal life which awaits him.

But suppose that one who sincerely desires to be a child of God, believes this supernatural influence exerted upon the heart, to be the peculiar experience of a real christian; but has himself never felt it; how great, how unutterable must be his wretchedness! All the delight in God, and all the pleasure in duty which he has ever felt, he thinks have been deceptive; and all which he can do of no avail to his salvation. The power of religion he indeed knows, for it fills him with dread of his Creator and Redeemer, and brings every faculty and thought into the most distressing bondage. But he is, and must be, while he retains his present convictions, an utter stranger to the comforts, the joys of a christian. Such an one, likewise have I known. For a long time he was accustomed to visit me, and to disclose to me the wretchedness, the anguish of days and nights, in which he sought for this communication of God to his soul, but sought in vain. I advised with him, endeavoured to comfort him, and prayed with him; but all in vain. Never have I known distress so acute, and of such duration. Without the smallest change in his countenance, the tears rolled from his eyes and fell upon the floor, through the agony of a heart which seemed to be quite broken; and which, feeling the resignation of despair, poured out its sorrows, as if it was gradually, but without resistance, exhausting itself. While this idea of religious experience is retained, this, I think, must be its natural consequence on a heart of great sensibility, which is longing to know the pleasures of religion, which yet however it believes may be most earnestly desired, and most devoutly sought, but never obtained. Is this then a correct idea of religious experience? I cannot so doubt the assurance of my Saviour. *Your heavenly Father will give the holy spirit to*

THEM THAT ASK HIM.\* *If ye know these things, HAPPY are ye if ye do them.†*

Do you ask then, why was not this young man happy? Why did he not receive these blessed influences of the spirit of God? It was because this erroneous idea of religious experience had taken such possession of his mind, that it excluded every other. But I thank God, that as I believe, in better views he has found peace; and I trust that, in the advancing influence of religion upon his heart and life, in a heart and life of increasing conformity to the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, he is daily ripening for greater usefulness here, and for higher approbation hereafter.

This mistake, both concerning conversion and religious experience, often originates in misconceptions of the operations of the Holy Spirit. It is supposed that, literally, God has mercy upon whom he *will* have mercy, and that these have religious experience; but that whom he *will*, he hardens; and that these can no more possess it than dry bones can possess the vigor and freshness of life. Thus is God, upon the entire misconceptions and misapplication of these expressions, believed to give his spirit *arbitrarily*, upon the mere suggestion of *will*, which in an earthly monarch or father, we should call cruel and unjust. Besides, is it possible that in any divine operation, *will* can be separated from, and uninfluenced by *wisdom* and *love*? Above all, is this the ordinary course of divine agency upon the hearts of men. Not so, reader, have I learned Christ. He has said, and blessed be his name, *Ask, and ye shall receive. Come unto me, all that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; and that God is more willing to give his holy spirit, and all good things to them that ask him, than is an earthly parent to give bread to his hungry children.* The experience of christians, like the necessities of different individuals, and the wants which are felt at different times by the same individual,

\* Luke xi. 13.

† John xiii. 17.

must of necessity be different; but all will obtain a genuine religious experience, who as children, seek the favor of God, relying upon his promises, and faithfully endeavouring to bring their whole hearts and lives, to cheerful and filial submission and obedience.

I would refer the reader to the definitions which we gave in our last number, of *religion*, and of *religious experience*; and request him to compare them with the mistaken opinions which I have endeavoured to ex-

pose in this essay. If his mind has inclined to this erroneous view of the subject, he may in this inquiry form a better estimate of the sober, pure, tranquil, progressive experience of a heart, seeking to glorify God by a temper, affections and habits conformed to his will, even in the most common intercourses and pursuits of life; and perhaps, in pursuing the same course, find himself much nearer than he had ever before been, to the kingdom of God.

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## POETRY.

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For the Christian Disciple.

HYMN.

SUPREME, eternal, uncreated mind,  
Lord of the world, and parent of man-  
kind,  
Thou God of power, of wisdom, and  
of love!  
Each perfect gift descends from thee  
above.

Thine is the sun, and thine the fruit-  
ful shower,  
The verdant herbage and the fragrant  
flower;  
The ripened grain, the heart-rejoic-  
ing vine,  
The cooling stream, the mighty  
deep, are thine.

For all thy glorious works we bless  
thy name,  
But most for sacred wisdom's hea-  
venly flame,  
That power which guides us on our  
earthly way,

And leads to regions of eternal day.

This ray celestial, energy divine,  
We dare not to a narrow sect con-  
fine.

We bless thy name for what the Gre-  
cian taught,

We bless thee, for the law that Moses  
brought;

But most for Jesus, messenger of  
grace,

The brightest image of the Father's  
face.

His gracious words support the droop-  
ing soul,

The raging passions of the heart con-  
trol,

And, when on scenes below we close  
the eye,

Unfold the joys of immortality.

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## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

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*Extract of a letter from Rev. Mr. Paterson to the British and Foreign Bible Society.*

"St. Petersburg, Feb. 21, 1813.

"In my last letter of the 26th of  
January, I gave you an account of the

formation of the Society here, which  
I hope caused much joy in Britain.  
On the 28th the first meeting of the



committee was held. The first thing done was to open the subscription."

Mr. Patterson then gave the names of thirty subscribers, among whom are several Princes, Counts, Counsellors, &c. Four of this number gave 1000 rubles (or dollars) each, and subscribed to pay the same sum annually. Having stated the several sums subscribed, he proceeds as follows:—

"So that the subscriptions of the first members amounted to about 16000 rubles; about 10000 of which is already paid, and the rest comes in daily. Many have come forward who were not at the first meeting, and subscribed with the same generosity. Two thousand rubles have also been sent in by an unknown friend. Thus you see the commencement is most promising. At the first meeting of the committee, measures were also taken for extending the Society, and making its object more generally known. For this purpose Mr. Popof was desired to draw up an account of the nature, origin, progress, and usefulness of Bible Societies, and what should be the objects which ought to engage the attention of the Petersburg Bible Society. It was also resolved to invite the foreign clergy in Petersburg, to become members of the Society, and to promote its interests; and Dr. Pitt was desired to draw up a letter for the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was truly pleasing to see what interest all the members of the committee took in the subject. This gave me still more reason to hope that the Society would continue to be a lasting blessing to the country. Some days ago the Head of the Jesuits called on our President to tell him, *that as his church forbade the people to read the Bible, he could not become a member of the Society.* He was very properly answered.

"Yesterday was the second meeting of our committee, and I can say that I never was present at a more interesting meeting. Mr. Popof's account was read, which is most excellent, and was heard with the deepest interest. Seven thousand thereof were

ordered to be printed immediately and distributed gratis.

"I also gave in a memorial on the manner in which the Society ought to proceed in furnishing a supply of Bibles, and what they ought to undertake first. Here I proposed three objects; 1. Printing the German Bible with standing types; 2. Supplying the prisoners of war with the New Testament; 3. Forming a Bible Depository in Petersburg, from which every one could be furnished with the Bible in his own language. The committee have resolved to purchase Russian Slavonian Bibles for sale and distribution. They have become very rare in the shops, and cost 30 rubles, or more. His Imperial Majesty is much satisfied with the manner in which the Society was opened, and promises to support it.

"The formation of the Society here has put new life into our friends in Dorpat, and they are now taking measures to have a regular Society formed. I expect daily a letter from Reval, informing me that they have become more active. I hope too that a Society will be formed in Curland. So soon as I hear from the two last mentioned places, I will propose some regulation in regard to the money you have appropriated to the printing of the Lettish and Estlandish Bible.

"Permit me to come forward again with a petition in behalf of our good friends the Swedes. In Finland are many thousand Swedes without the Bible. The Society in Abo need to employ all their funds for the Finnish Bible, of which I hope soon to send you a specimen. The consequence is, that at least for many years nothing can be done for the Swedes in Finland from this quarter. Now I would take the liberty to propose, that your committee should appropriate a sum of money for the purpose of procuring a stock of Bibles for their use. I should propose that you give the Society in Abo 100*l.* on condition that they employed it in purchasing Bibles and Testaments from the Society in Stockholm, selling them out again at prime cost, so that the whole

of the sum be returned again into the funds of the Society to procure a fresh supply with, till every one who was willing and able to pay for a Bible had obtained one. A second sum ought to be appropriated for procuring a supply of Bibles and Testaments to be given gratis, or at reduced prices to the poor, and this sum would be renewed from time to time, till all were furnished with the scriptures.\*

"Your most affectionate friend,  
"JOHN PATERSON."

To the friends of the christian religion it must be matter of joy, that in the capital of the vast empire of Russia, such interest has been excited in favor of extending the knowledge of the scriptures to every class of men; and that the emperor and many other persons of rank have become engaged in the glorious work. We shall take the liberty to mention one blessed effect which may probably result from the influence of Bible Societies, should they continue their progress; and which should be an in-

ducement to every one to unite in their favor who wishes the welfare of mankind, viz. the influence of these societies may gradually diminish the calamities of war, until this desolating scourge shall be excluded from the world. Perhaps no other institution was ever invented by men which has had so powerful an effect to unite christians of different nations, and to bind them together by the cords of love. The consequence of this union must be, that in every nation where the institution prevails, a large portion of the people will be strongly opposed to needless wars; they will use their influence to prevent such wars, or to render them unpopular and bring them speedily to an end, if they happen to take place. In proportion as a due regard for the gospel shall be excited in the hearts of men, an abhorrence of war must also be excited. And should the rulers of nations become cordially united to the Bible Societies, the rage for war will subside, and the blessings of peace will overspread the earth.

### *Bibles for the poor.*

CHRISTIAN ministers and other christians acquainted with the wants of the poor are informed, that they can be supplied with Bibles for distribution among the poor by the Massachusetts Bible Society. Applica-

tion is to be made to Rev. William E. Channing, Stephen Higginson, jun. Esq. or Mr. Jonathan Phillips of Boston, being the Executive Committee of said Society.

### *Candidates for the ministry in Cambridge and its vicinity.*

Rev. Mr. Leonard, Boston.  
Mr. William Popkin, Malden,  
Mr. Ed. W. Andrews, Newbury-port.  
Mr. Joseph Field, Boston.  
Mr. Lemuel Capen, Cambridge.

Mr. John E. Abbot, Boston.  
Mr. Joseph Haven, Cambridge.  
Mr. David Damon, do.  
Mr. Hiram Weston, do.  
Mr. David Reed, do.

N. B. Several valuable communications are necessarily postponed. We hope our readers will pardon the deficiency of Religious Intelligence; more was prepared for this Number, but excluded by the length of some pieces we were requested to insert. It may be expected that in future more pages will be devoted to intelligence.

\* The above request was complied with by voting 200%. for the purposes mentioned.